[redacted]

5th January 2025

To whom it may concern

I wish to object to the recent application for a 'Transport and Work Act Order' submitted by the Greater Cambridge Partnership on November 12th 2024 to allow for a new busway, travel hub, and path for walkers and cyclists linking Cambourne to Cambridge.

I believe their stated 'needs' for this project are inaccurate and therefore there is no justifiable cause for this project.

Needed to avoid heavy congestion along the A1303, coming in from the A428, due to:
Predicted 2350 extra homes may be built at Cambourne
Predicted 3500 extra homes may be built at Bourne Airfield.
Future employment increase possible on the West Cambridge Site.

Current situation and Congestion:
There is already an existing large transport hub (Madingly Park and Ride) just 3.8 miles further in to Cambridge from the new proposed hub at Scotland Farm, which is currently arable land.
This existing transport hub is between Eddington and the West Cambridge site, so easy access to both. It is also served by the 'U' University bus, which runs frequently between Girton College, the West Cambridge site, along Grange Road, and onwards to Cambridge station and the Biomedical Campus. These buses are reliable, electric, with onboard wifi, and link all areas.

At present there is the usual heavier amount of traffic coming into Cambridge in the early mornings, as expected, but the traffic along the stretch of A1303, coming in from the A428 in this area does keep moving, and quite a bit of it is coming in to access the M11 southbound (at junction 13), also opposite Madingly P&R. The proposed busway route will not alleviate any of this traffic, however it will severely impact the whole area around Coton.

Latest reports for new homes to be built around Cambridge only show 256 houses due to be currently built north of Lower Cambourne, and next to the business park. Other reported developments are not within this catchment area, other than increased housing in Eddington area, again mainly for University requirements.

Cambourne also has easy access in the opposite direction, towards St Neots and Bedford, with access to rail links at St Neots. So this heavy predicted increase in traffic may not materialise.
This has never been a popular busway project and opposed by many different groups, but the GCP seem determined to push it forwards now. Thechair of the GCP has stated 'failure to progress this scheme would jeopardise future Gateway reviews of the 'City Deal', potentially failing to unlock further Government investment in Greater Cambridge. (*money before the best option ?*)

A good reason for delaying any work on this proposed busway is that East West Rail has plans for a railway station at Cambourne, to link with a new Cambridge South Station.

Planned Cambourne busway (via Coton)
This route was planned and eventually decided on by the GCP in December 2018 but does not appear to have been revised or reviewed since. There were considerable objections to previous proposals, and a downright refusal by the GCP to even consider any alternatives. The proposed cost at the time was £160 million which has now increased to £200 million, but may well be significantly more.

There seems to be a determination within the GCP to spend as much as they can rather than considering efficiency and value for money, as well as ignoring local communities who may be badly affected by their plans. I am also concerned about creating yet another poorly planned guided busway regarding the history of such developments.

Busways to date in Cambridge.

This first busway, created on the existing track of the old railway line running north to St Ives, was in my opinion, a great idea, but poorly planned and built. It was severely over budget, left with faults that were never fully resolved, and I understand costs were settled out of court. The service has often been poor with the only redeeming feature being that buses can transfer onto normal roads when there are problems along the track. While achieving quicker access to Cambridge outskirts, it is then slowed by poorly maintained roads and city traffic. The track for walkers and cyclists, alongside, is regularly flooded. Parts of the route were recently closed for maintenance on tree roots.

The second busway, skirting one edge of Cambridge, again good idea but poorly designed resulting in a narrow service road, totally inadequate for the numbers of pedestrians and cyclists trying to use it to get to work, school, college, or hospital. After three fatalities it was only running in one direction for nearly two years.

Environmental Impact of Coton busway scheme:

We have been told that the environmental impacts of the Coton busway scheme will be off-set with a minimum 10% diversity net gain. This is impossible considering what it requires, both the destruction of a number of extremely large existing (none orchard trees), which were dismissed in an earlier report as 'just hedging', and also a bridge over the M11 as well as all the usual guided busway structures. We were told that an alternative route along the current road would not be considered due to sites of scientific importance, although Coton orchard itself is an area of great scientific importance. Some of these large trees may well have roosting species, possibly bats.

In particular the proposed extra bridge across the M11 will be completely disastrous to the area and surrounding roads. The amount of construction materials needed for this busway and the bridge will create a total deficit in any diversity, as well as even greater problems along the M11, which in particular is regularly full to capacity and much freight traffic is almost at a standstill in the mornings between the A14 right down to the A10 roundabout near Trumpington, (junction 11) south of Cambridge. I understand this bridge is necessary to access the Grange Road side of the M11 before terminating? Presumably passengers can then join the existing 'U' bus service onwards?

Coton village itself will also be extremely impacted as access to it as well as through and around it will possibly have to change. At present many people travel by bike or on foot across the footbridge to Eddington and the West Cambridge site as well as further into Cambridge. There is also a large number of people who travel from Eddington and Cambridge, down to Coton to access the Nature Reserve there.

In Summary :

The proposed Cambourne busway plan (via Coton) will not resolve its stated intention of tackling supposed congestion on the A1303 from the A428.

It proposes a duplication of existing services such as the current transport hub, with its close proximity to the West Cambridge site, and access to existing frequent bus services on the 'U' Universal bus service all the way from Girton down to the Biomedical Campus, via Grange Road.

The environmental impact of a busway running through Coton and the creation of a new bridge over the M11 will be huge, possibly even catastrophic, both on the environment, current traffic flows, freight travel along the M11, and local communities.

While I love the idea of guided busways, these need to be well planned and well executed. They also need to respect the communities they pass through. If they are not well planned and executed are they actually value for money.

Heather Sales.
Resident in the area since 1978.
I currently use many of the facilities within the Cambridgshire area, both inside Cambridge and the surrounding villages, including up to Cambourne, and beyond.

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